HQ&SPT BN,
Camp Pendleton
Human Factors Board
“One Battalion’s Approach”

Col Rogers and staff

Agenda

- HQSPTBN Scene Setter 2008
- BN’s Force Preservation Program
- Overarching message and three pillars
- Human Factors Board
- Results, lessons learned, validation
- Summary

Scenesetter

- Summer 2008 Change of Command
- Challenges:
  - No official or structured Battalion safety or force preservation program
  - No unit safety officer or unit medical officer
  - Diverse, complex unit of 1700 personnel spread over Camp Pendleton complex
  - “Base” mentality
- Plan of attack

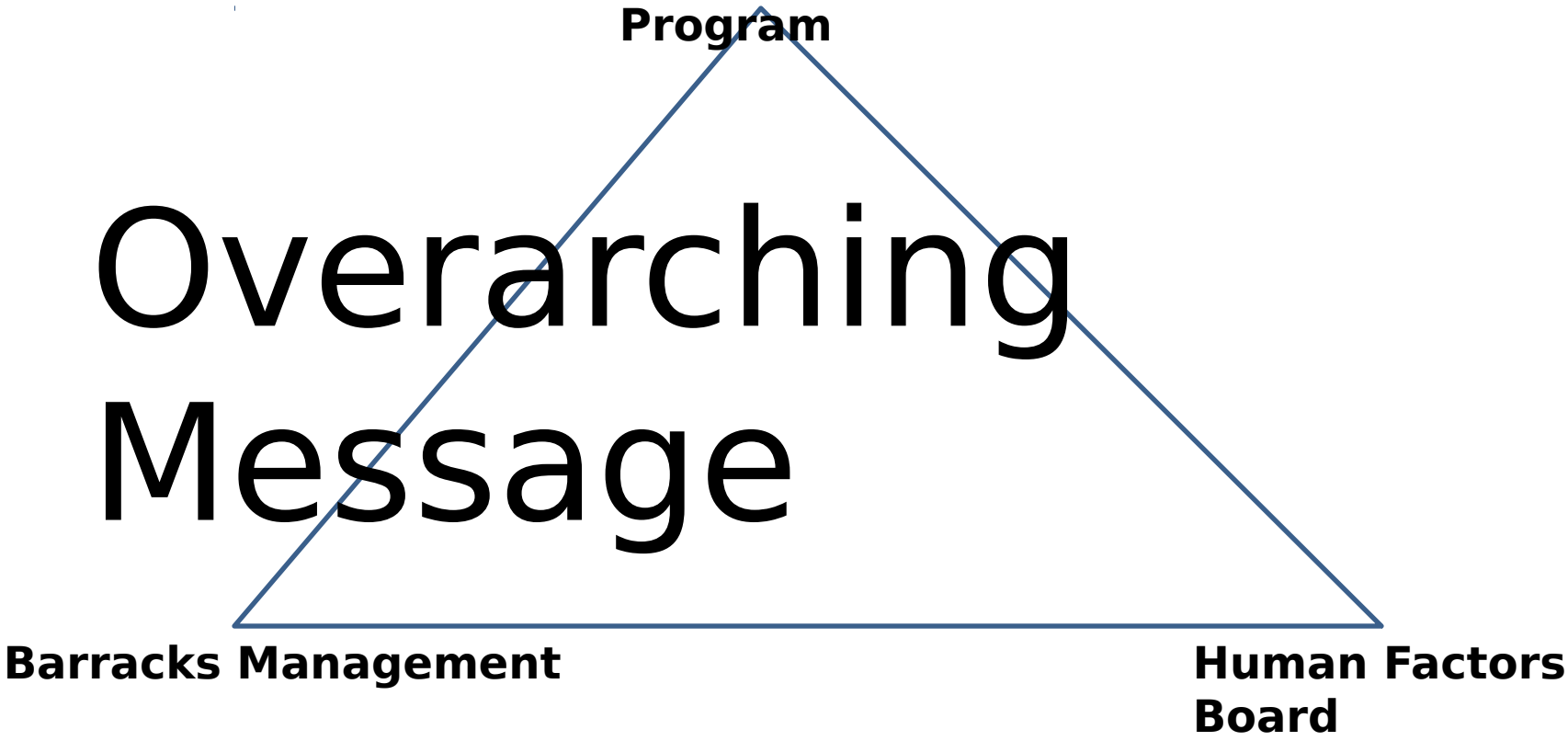
Scenesetter

- Plan of attack
  - Comprehensive safety approach at all levels and facets of command
  - Leverage all existing safety tools at disposal to include Base and regional assets
  - Improve process and incentivize participation
  - Share lessons learned and “get smart” on resources, higher level aide, sister and partner units and organizations

BN’s Force Preservation Plan

- Overarching message and three pillars
- Value of each Marine to unit, Corps, family, life
    - “THE MESSAGE”
  - Barracks management
  - Safety Program
  - Human Factors Board

BN's Force Preservation Program



Human Factors Board

- Borrowed from aviation construct:
  - BN core leadership meets weekly to discuss human factors
- However, program enhanced by following:
  - Mentorship and team leader program
  - Risk category assignment
  - Proactive and aggressive inclusion of outside sources/aide

Human Factors Board

- Frequency
  - Weekly or as needed
  - Standing core leadership:
    - CO chairs (XO alternative weeks)
    - XO, SGTMAJ, Chaplains, FRO, SACO, Company Commanders, Company 1st SGTs, Legal, mentors.
    - Invitees as needed: Medical, family advocacy, guest speakers, mental health specialists, etc.
    - Field trip PMEs as needed: Balboa, SARP, MHU, CSACC, FAP, etc.
    - One trip to a facility (e.g. Balboa MHU) better than a 1000 e-mails and phone calls…made huge $$$ this way

Human Factors Board

- Each Marine at risk assigned a category
  - High risk (suicide ideation or attempt, overwhelming challenges, etc)
  - Medium risk (Stressed, MHU, serious challenges, etc)
  - Lower or emergent risk (facing or adjudicated discipline, divorce, loss, etc)
  - In depth case files developed on each Marine, maintained by Co Commander/Section heads
- Each Marine at risk assigned dedicated mentorship:
  - A senior Mentor (role model, daily contact, father/bigger sibling relationship) – SNCO, overwatch responsibilities
  - A Team Leader (an admired NCO, close contact, 24/7)
  - An Assistant Teal Leader (close friend, equal, good influence, 24/7)

Human Factors Board

- Unit chain of command heavily involved with Marine at risk
  - Continual feedback
- HFB discusses cases in depth weekly
  - Mentors brought in to discuss lessons learned and be part of process
  - Round table discussion improves core group knowledge and ability to solve issues; innovation and creativity encouraged
  - Marines can move up or down in risk categories (or even “graduate” out of risk altogether
  - Cases of great concern are given full attention
    - Extreme cases: 8-day and 30-day briefs are “pre-fabricated” to suss out what has been missed, or what BN has overlooked
  - Meetings usually no longer than an hour
    - Best hour of week spent

Results

- BN *KNEW* its Marines inside/out
- Emergent cases quickly identified; many times nipped early
- Feedback very positive from Marines
  - Culture of coming forward with issues or identifying emergent issues with each other
- Mentors and team leaders were gold mines and key to program
- Developed strong relationships with enablers/aide organizations

Lessons Learned

- If can be done at a unit with no safety program, as diverse and disparate as HQSPTBN's, can be done anywhere
- Not time intensive when alternative considered:
  - Whole unit will come to stop to deal with a calamity (damage control mode); too late then
  - It's what we do; what we're supposed to do: Lead
- Simple yet effective, instructive, collaborative, inclusive

Validation

- No deaths due to safety, training mishaps
- Over 60% drop in DWIs within one year
- Safety officer (Capt/S-4) won CMC’s Safety Officer of the Year award one year after taking over! Team effort.
- Marine feedback

Summary

- Final thoughts and considerations

Questions?